Bibliothek--101 B-5 (1948-2010) 1961 UBS Bush Negroes UBS Boni

To this traditional knowledge, which remains indispensable, has been added for the past several years educational knowledge of mechanics, because the use of outboard motors is becoming more and more common; this knowledge is transmitted in empirical fashion as it has been acquired. It must be recorded that the motors go and that they are well kept up.

The system of education employed by the Refugee Blacks is rarely effective; these children are extremely turbulent and very difficult when they are in a group. When they are divided up individually in the midst of adults, they are placed under the best conditions for learning the techniques and traditions of their group.

The person charged with the education of a child does not willingly entrust him to another and takes him along wherever he moves. However, by reason of pregnancy, the mother guardian sends the children she is raising to camp in other houses on the days when her husband comes to visit her. Boys go to camp at the house of a brother, an uncle, a comrade; the motive for girls who have not yet reached puberty; but it is not the same for girls who have reached puberty; they are subjected to more supervision.

This is one of the reasons why the Boni find it repugnant to [illegible] children to attend Church school of Christianity. Dutch school of Sunday. Without wishing to tackle here the sad problem of its failure [illegible], we must state that this teaching, entirely inappropriate and dispensed by teachers who look down on the Refugee Blacks, has results nearly similar to those observed generally in Africa, the main one being to make the children strangers to their own tradition and misfits in their own country. There is practically no example of a case where the Boni nation has benefited from having one of its children go to school: if the child succeeds, he leaves for Paramaribo and never comes back again. If he fails, he then has much more

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difficulty in learning the techniques of his group, for the years when the mind is most plastic have been lost in this regard; as for the knowledge acquired at school, it is so foreign to the life of the Refugee Blacks that at the end of a few years none of it remains except vague shatterings.

In general, the process of education employed among the Refugee Blacks is imitation of the adult. A child is rarely given a lesson as such. He does something done, he tries on his own initiative, and little by little he learns. For example, /133/ he sees his guardian make a bow; he is simply asked to go and get dry palm branches and to take away the chips; he hears the adults discuss the job as it goes on. At about the age of 12 or 13 he tries to make a first bow for himself with the help of an older comrade. He progressively acquires knowledge of the technique.

Boys begin to take part in farm work from the age of six or seven, principally weeding and planting. At about ten or eleven they begin to handle the machete and help to cut through the bush; at about 12 they begin to handle the axe and learn to fell trees. At 14 or 15 they begin to make small bows. At adolescence of 16 or 17 is in general capable of cutting a clearing for his mother or sister.

Most often the guardian takes his role very seriously, giving his every attention or teaching the child all that is necessary. If it is a woman, she asks her brothers to teach the techniques of hewing and building.

The principle is to develop very early a sense of responsibility in the child by making it progressively necessary for him to earn his living. The guardian does not furnish pocket money, and with the exception of a loincloth every other year, no manufactured objects (children under 11-12 years not being clothed, he has almost no expenses for clothing). But he gives the child progressively chances to earn money by his work. From ten years on, the child begins to render some services: for example for the construction of a bow, he helps transport the dry palm branches intended for the burning. If the bow is being